

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

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Simple Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

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Don't let the holidays throw you off the path towards your health and wellness goals. Traveling, eating out, attending holiday gatherings, and hosting visitors can make it especially hard to stick with your regular routine. By following these simple tips, you can stay on track and enjoy the holiday season, too!

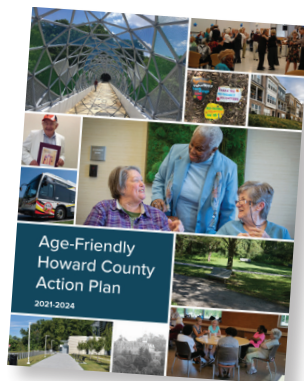
- **Bring your own dish** to the holiday party so you have a go-to food that you know is made with healthy ingredients.
- **Don't skip meals** — skipping meals to “save up” for a holiday meal will cause you to be ravenous when you arrive, which will lead to overeating.
- **Start with vegetable appetizers** to take the edge off your hunger before the meal is served.
- **Fill up a napkin** (instead of a plate) when snacking at a party, so that you don't overfill it.
- **Take a small plate** of foods that you enjoy and then move away from the buffet table to socialize with friends and family.
- **Choose foods from a variety** of food groups at your holiday meal, including vegetables, lean protein and whole grains. Fill up on fiber-rich foods (like fresh fruits and vegetables) instead of sweets.
- **Wait 20 minutes** before you go back for a second plate of food; give your body time to decide if it's still hungry for more.
- **Liquid calories count** — limit calories from sweetened beverages and alcoholic drinks. Choose sparkling water or calorie-free, flavored waters instead.

With a little planning, you can make this holiday season enjoyable and feel good about your health, too!

Age-Friendly Howard County Action Plan 2021-2024

Howard County residents of all ages and backgrounds working together, giving of their time, talents and energy to make their community better, will be the foundation of a successful Age-Friendly Howard County.

All residents are invited to decide how, where and when they will become involved in the action steps to make Howard County a great place to grow up and grow older. To view the Age-Friendly Action Plan and find out how you can get involved, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly.



A Message from Howard County Executive Calvin Ball



As 2021 comes to a close, we reflect on the challenges we have faced this year, and celebrate all that we have accomplished. Despite the ongoing pandemic, there are many bright spots of progress and hope for an upcoming year of renewal and reunion.

Our community continues to look out for one another — over the past year 99.9 percent of our residents 65+ received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, protecting you and your loved ones. If you are already fully vaccinated, you may be eligible for a booster shot. Please check with your medical provider or hchealth.org for more information. As we head into winter, more folks are gathering indoors, so it's critical to have a highly-vaccinated community.

In 2021, we completed the transformative renovations for the Bain 50+ Center, and secured the vital funding to begin renovations for our East Columbia 50+ Center. In fact, this month we hope to break ground and get construction underway on the East Columbia center project, ending our year on a high note. I also want to extend my congratulations to Courtney Barkley of the Office on Aging and Independence, who was named Howard County's 2021 Employee of the Year!

As we head into the holiday season, please remember to Stay COVID Safe as you gather with friends and family after spending time apart. We want all our residents to remain safe and healthy this month, and for the year to come. Wishing you all a wonderful winter, and a Happy New Year!

Courtney Barkley EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR 2021

Courtney Barkley, Health Promotion and Nutrition Division Manager for the Office on Aging and Independence, was named 2021 Howard County Employee of the Year. Barkley was recognized for her admirable and tireless efforts to help ensure that no older adult resident went without a meal during the pandemic. She created efficient distribution methods, encouraged culturally-sensitive meals and established partnerships with local restaurants in order to address food needs throughout the county in a variety of responsive ways. "My sincere congratulations to Courtney Barkley for her vital work this year ensuring our older residents had warm, healthy meals. All of our awardees and all those employees nominated are just a few examples of the stellar work that goes into keeping services available and serving our community," said County Executive Ball.



Tips for Caregivers

Coping with the Holidays

Many look forward to the holidays as a time for joyful celebration. But if you are a caregiver for an older adult, or a family member with a long-term illness, the additional responsibilities and planning can increase your stress as well.



Make Holiday Gatherings More Enjoyable for All

- **Organize holiday events** around your routine. Keep time for eating, sleeping, bathing, and dressing as close to your regular schedule as possible.
- **Plan extra activities**, short trips and outings during the best time of the day for you and your loved one.
- **To limit fatigue and stress** for you and your loved one, set limits and boundaries, and save your energy for what is most important.
- **Keep gatherings small.** If you attend a large event with your loved one, try to find a quiet area to reduce stimulation.
- **Start new traditions** for you and your loved one. You are not letting others down; it's OK to pass the responsibility on to someone else.
- **Ask for help** from others. If you always planned or hosted an event, invite others to step up and share their ideas.

Gift-giving is an integral part of many holiday celebrations, but it may be a good time to simplify the traditions. Use catalogs or online shopping to reduce the stress of going into stores. Send gift cards or exchange small, meaningful gifts like framed photos or favorite treats.

If holiday travel is on the horizon, be sure to plan ahead. Make sure your destination is accessible for your loved one and remember to bring needed supplies, a change of clothing and medications. Let family or friends know in advance of how things have changed in your daily life as a caregiver by including a simple note in your holiday cards or emails.

Lastly, don't hesitate to share your own wish list! The holidays can be stressful, but it can be a good time to ask for help from friends and family members. Let them know how much you appreciate them spending time with your loved one or helping with meals, chores or holiday shopping. Their generosity is your special gift — time for yourself.

Visit www.howardcountymd.gov/caregiversupport for more caregiving tips.

Howard County

Office on Aging & Independence

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Handmade with LOVE

A Howard County Initiative of Operation Gratitude in Support of All Who Serve

The Office of Veterans and Military Families extends its sincere gratitude to all those who participated in this year's annual "Handmade with Love" initiative to provide handmade hats and scarves for currently deployed members of our military branches. Our soldiers are deeply touched by the care and effort when they receive gifts, especially handmade items from supportive fellow Americans at home. Special thanks to the Rotary Club; Tom Thumb Square Dance Club; Community Knit & Crochet Group of Howard County; Sit, Stitch and Give at the North Laurel 50+ Center; and Sew Who Cares at the East Columbia 50+ Center.

For more information about the Office of Veterans and Military Families, including access to the Veterans Resource Guide, visit us at www.howardcountymd.gov/veterans.



THANK YOU!



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